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CRITICISMS AND DISCUSSIONS.

"HUMANISM."*

It appears that philosophy once more has an "issue." Since the days of T. H. Green's attack upon the fortifications of English empiricism, neo-Hegelian Idealism has held most of the field in England and America. The legends on its banners are : "Reality consists of an absolute system of immutable ideas." "Truth consists in the reflection, representation, or symbolization, by finite ideas of this absolute system." Though, incidentally, thought may perform a reconstructing function in experience, its chief business as the subject matter of logic is to "represent" or "correspond to" the unchanging and unchangeable system of ideas.

The problem set by these conceptions, since the days of Plato, is that of a criterion for truth thus defined. How is this "correspondence," "representation," etc., to be tested? The difficulty is Janus-faced. On the one side we are confronted by the ancient and honorable problem of "The Finite and Infinite"; on the other, by the no less honorable and ancient one of "Permanence and Change." The latter has been rendered particularly acute by the work of psychologists of the last twenty-five years in showing up the dynamic character of ideas. How can anything so flexible, as psychologists have shown ideas to be, reflect or represent an unchangeable reality?

It would seem that the logical and epistemological treatises based on the conceptions embodied in the above "legends" must needs have kept this crucial problem steadily in view. But strangely enough, at any rate certainly enough, such has not been the case. Volume after volume of logical theory has appeared in which the topic of "Validity" appears as an incidental but always a troublesome matter, yet one which, belonging to the field, must be covered.

* The title of a volume of philosophical essays by F. C. S. Schiller, M. A., Fellow and Tutor of Corpus Christi College.

Hence, too, after several hundred pages have been filled with an account of how this correspondence is effected (though it is indeed difficult to recognize much of it as an account of "correspondence") we find the chapter on "Validity" consisting chiefly of a confession that the account of correspondence has ended in failure. It would seem that the necessity of such confessions must long ago have led to a suspicion of the assumed conceptions upon which such confessed failures are constructed. Instead, it has for the most part only stimulated more subtle and refined analyses within the limits prescribed by these assumptions.

However, these conceptions have meanwhile not gone entirely unchallenged. Over twenty-five years ago, Mr. C. S. Peirce wrote in *The Popular Science Monthly:* "Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we can see the object of our perception to have, then our conception of these effects is the whole conception of our object." A few years later, the challenge again appears in Mr. William James' chapter on "Reasoning." Although that chapter was bound in a large volume labelled "Psychology" in large gilt letters there were statements in it very important for logic and epistemology. These statements were to the effect that thinking takes place at the point where activity encounters difficulty in going on in a non-thinking fashion; and that the chief business of thinking, from the psychologists' stand-point, at any rate, appears to be that of resolving this difficulty. (Of course it is equally in order to regard the "difficulty" as teleological for thought, i. e., it occurs that thought may go on; each is teleological to the other. Teleology is thus inside, not outside, the process.)

No one who remembers his history of philosophy would think of calling this in either its content or its method a "brand new" discovery. Such a claim would and should quickly be met with such names as Augustine, Fichte, Schopenhauer, to say nothing of the "primacy" of Kant's *Practical Reason.* On the other hand, this same historical sense should make it equally impossible, even from a very superficial survey, to regard the movement as a mere masquerade of some earlier type of voluntarism.

Since the appearance of Mr. James' psychology this instrumental character of thinking has been the dominant standpoint for its treatment by psychologists, and in the meantime the conviction has been growing that this must have its significance for the relation of thought to truth and reality; that if it is sound psychology, it must be good logic and epistemology. Within the past few years, this conviction has found explicit expression to such an extent as to

constitute what is now a recognized movement and issue in philosophy. To these expressions Mr. James has continued his contributions in his *Will to Believe,* more explicitly still in his *Philosophical Concepts and Practical Results,* in 1896, and in his more recent *Varieties of Religious Experience.* Much also of Prof. J. M. Baldwin's writings, e. g., his article on "Selective Thinking," is essentially of the same import. The most detailed and articulate contribution to this period of literature, however, is Mr. Dewey's article on "The Reflect Arc Concept," (*Psychological Review,* Vol. III, 1896), the logical implications of which, most readers apparently failed to discover at the time it appeared. This failure is doubtless another witness to the intensity of the ancient prejudice between logic and psychology. Scarcely less significant, if not so explicit, have been many contributions from Germany, and especially from France.

While the literature of the movement clearly shows it to be a general one, the most self-concious and detailed manifestations of it have appeared within the past two years in America and England, and interestingly enough, almost simultaneously. In England, Mr. F. C. S. Schiller is by far the most thorough-going and militant representative. Mr. Schiller has recently put his contributions to the movement into a volume which he calls "Humanism." By Humanism Mr. Schiller means "the philosophic attitude which, without wasting thought upon attempts to construct experience *a priori,* is content to take human experience as the clue to the world of human experience; * * * to remember that man is the measure of all things, i. e., of his whole experience-world and that if our standard measure be false all our measurements are vitiated; to remember that man is the maker of the sciences which subserve his human purposes; to remember that a philosophy which analyses us away is thereby merely exhibiting its failure to achieve its purpose; * * * this is the real root of Humanism."

Mr. Schiller feels that "more than the usual amount of apology" is due for the small proportion of new matter in the volume, all but one of the fifteen essays having appeared in more or less complete form elsewhere. However, I think that Mr. Schiller may be sure that his readers will be glad to have these essays in the revised, permanent and attractive form which they now possess.

Mr. Schiller prefers the term "Humanism" to "Pragmatism" on the ground that the latter "is in reality only the application of Humanism to the theory of knowledge." However valid Pragmatism may be as a method of logic, "we must yet concede that the man is greater than any method he has made and that our Humanism

must interpret it." (pp. xxi.) This certainly appears well taken. But some, even of those most in sympathy with Mr. Schiller's general view, may feel that however central human experience may be, it may not after all include all experience and they may continue to long, therefore, for a term that shall express the instrumental, reconstructive character of thought in experience as such.

The most explicit exposition of Mr. Schiller's Humanism is to be found in the essays on: "The Ethical Basis of Metaphysics," "Useless Knowledge," the new essay on "Truth." "The Metaphysics of the Time Process,"—an illuminating discussion of that much befogged subject; "Reality and Idealism," "On Preserving Appearances," and Essay XII, on "Activity and Substance."

In the first two essays we get some very general variations of the central *motif* announced in the preface. The theses of "The Ethical Basis of Metaphysics" are: (1) "The purposive character of mental life generally must influence and pervade also our most remotely cognitive activities " (p. 8); (2) Reality is not something which cognition is to merely represent. Hence "is awarded to the ethical conception of good, supreme authority over the logical conception of true, and the metaphysical conception of real. The good becomes a determinate both of the true and the real. For from the pursuit of the latter we may never eliminate the reference to the former." (p. 9)

As an illustration of the competition between old and new habits of thinking, and of the eternal vigilance necessary to a consistent maintenance of the latter, it is interesting to note that even Mr. Schiller's thoroughly sophisticated consciousness of the problem is almost betrayed into an identification of reality with the "objective" as opposed to the "subjective." (Note p. 11.) I say "almost," for the case is perhaps saved by the statement immediately following: "The actual situation is, of course, a case of interaction, a process of cognition, in which the subject and object determine each other and both we and reality are involved, and we might add—*evolved.*"

The central theme,—cognition a function in conduct—is further elaborated in the dialogue "Useless Knowledge," which is in Mr. Schiller's most characteristic style and which serves as an excellent introduction to the chapter on "Truth." In the latter, after a negative criticism of the views of truth as: (1) "agrement with reality," (2) "as systematic coherence," Mr. Schiller sets forth his conception of truth as "a form of value" and finds that the logic which expounds this view with truth is hand in glove with psychology. The outcome of Mr. Schiller's analysis is: "As regards

the psychical fact of the truth valuation, truth may be called an ultimate function of our intellectual activity." As regards the object valued as true, "truth is that manipulation of them which turns out upon trial to be useful, primarily for any human end, but ultimately for that perfect harmony of our whole life which forms our final aspirations." (p. 61.)

The essay "On Preserving Appearances" is a very telling criticism of "the familiar antithesis between 'appearance' and reality," the vogue of which Mr. Schiller regards as the chief constructive result of the work of Mr. F. H. Bradley. (p. 184.) Again we read (p. 199) "our inferences must approve themselves * * * by the power they give us to *transform* our experiences. * * * The transmutation of appearances, therefore, must not be represented as an inscrutable privilege of the Absolute; it must be made a weapon mortal hands can actually wield."

The last thesis of this chapter, viz., that Ultimate Reality must be absolutely "perfect" and "harmonious" and the contents of the essay following on "Activity and Substance" develop a conception of Mr. Schiller's that is likely to give some of his most sympathetic readers pause, and is certain to be seized upon by the critic looking for "internal inconsistencies." The conception is that of an ultimate "changeless activity," and immutable "beatific consciousness" as the goal of thought-burdened experience. The limits of these remarks forbid even an outline of Mr. Schiller's very incisive argument. But it would not be strange if some should have trouble with the conception of "a changeless activity." Not that activity is to be identified with *mere change* (as most of the critics of "Pragmatism" assume) but that it is to be change*less,* that there is to be no change anywhere in it, is surely a hard saying. Some will be puzzled also on reading (p. 105) "if therefore the ultimate explanation of the world is to be in terms of ends, it would seem as though it must be in terms of individual ends realized in and through the time-process"; and then to find (p. 227) that "self realization must assume the form, not of a hideous, barbarous neurotic restlessness, nor of an infinite, and therefore futile struggle, but of an activity, which, *transcending change and time* [italics mine] preserves itself in an harmonious equipoise." Nor is it inconceivable that some one should profess to find in this conception of an "ultimate," "unchangeable" "completely beatific" experience certain features not altogether unlike Mr. Bradley's and Mr. Royce's Absolute. However, one gathers that the conception has an interrogation mark after it in Mr. Schiller's own mind, and its exposition

is made in quite an hypothetical spirit. And one is here reminded that the complaints by critics of "lack of system," of "the ignoring of fundamental points," etc., in "Pragmatic" literature is certainly premature. Nothing so far has been put out that pretends to be anything more than prolegomena.

On the whole it is safe to say that whatever becomes of the "Pragmatic movement," when the history of "the revival of Pragmatism" or "Humanism," or "Teleological Empiricism" is written, Mr. Schiller's contributions are certain to have a prominent and permanent place.

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THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

The least religious experience is so mysterious and so complex, that a moderate degree of reflection upon it tends to a sense of intellectual impotence. "If I speak," says Emerson, "I define and confine, and am less." One would gladly set down religion among the unspeakable things and avoid the imputation of degrading it. It is certain that the enterprise of defining religion is at present in disrepute. It has been undertaken so often and so unsuccessfully that contemporary students for the most part prefer to supply a list of historical definitions of religion, and let their variety demonstrate their futility. Metaphysicians and psychologists agree that in view of the differences of creed, ritual, organization, conduct and temperament that have been true of different religions in different times and places, and may as well abandon the idea that there is a constant element.

But on the other hand we have the testimony afforded by the name religion; and the ordinary judgments of men to the effect that it signifies something to be religious, and to be more or less religious. There is an elementary logical principle to the effect that a group-name implies certain common group-characters. Impatience with abstract or euphemistic definitions should not blind us to the truth. Even the psychologist tends in his description of religious phenomena to single out and emphasize what he calls a *typical* religious experience. And the same applies to the idealist's treatment of the matter. Religion, he reasons, is essentially a development of which the true meaning can be seen only in the higher stages. The primitive religion, is, he argues, only implicit religion. But lower stages cannot be regarded as belonging to a single development with higher stages, if there